

The Cities of Ancient Egypt



Read the paragraph for background information. Then use the map to answer the questions.

Why does it seem like the titles of upper and lower Egypt are backwards? The mouth of a river is considered its lower section. Its source is usually at a higher elevation, so it is the river's upper section. Upper and Lower Egypt refer to their place on the Nile River—the source of life in that section of Africa.

Egypt was the first civilization to make someone king. Most other people in the region lived in independently ruled city-states. Egypt unified first as Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, and then these joined together under a common pharaoh. Later, Nubia became part of the empire, too.

Human settlement was made possible in Egypt by the flooding of the Nile. Heavy spring rains in Ethiopian mountains cause the flooding of the Nile. The river begins to rise at the first cataract in the last week of June, reaches its peak in September, begins to recede in October, and reaches its low point in June.

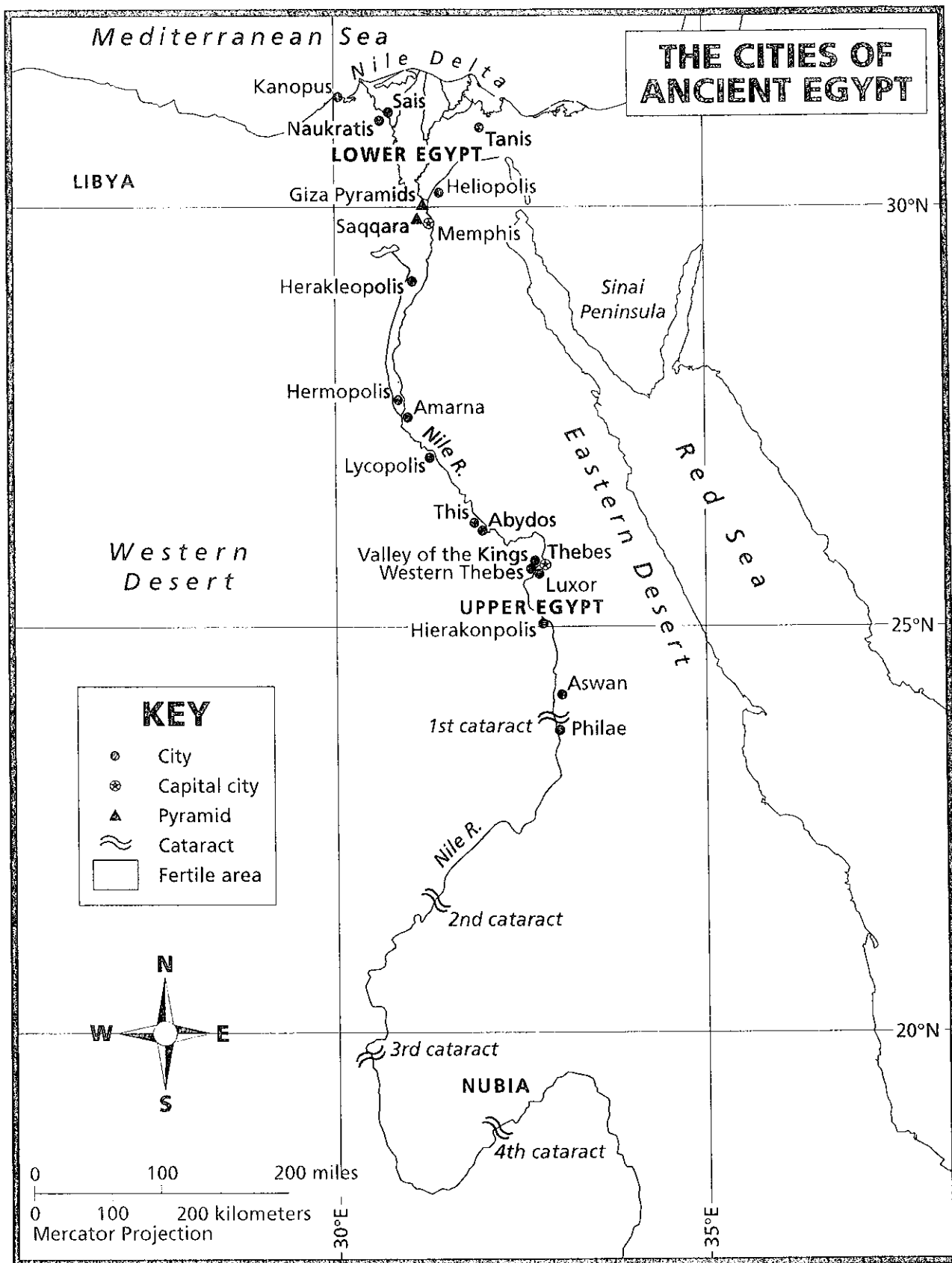
A cataract is an obstruction of hard stone that turns the river into an impassable rapid. The cataracts cut Egypt off from the area to the south. Egypt then extended from the first cataract to the Mediterranean, where the Nile exited in seven mouths. Over the centuries, the path of the river changed. The Nile now exits in only two places.

1. What is the capital city of Upper Egypt? Of Lower Egypt? _____
2. Which city is immediately north of Philae? _____
3. If you traveled east from Saqqara, what city would you soon come to? What is the significance of this city?

4. In the delta area, two cities very close to each other border the same stretch of the river. What are the two cities? Which is on the eastern side of the river and which is on the western side?

5. Which city appears to sit right on the 25th parallel north? _____
6. Which cities are at approximately $27\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$ and 31°E ? _____
7. Which natural geographic feature is at approximately 20°N and $30\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{E}$? _____
8. At what point is the distance from one side of the fertile area to the other at its thinnest point? Approximately how wide is it? _____
9. What is the approximate distance from one side of the fertile area to the other at its widest point? Where is it? _____
10. What is the approximate distance from the third to the fourth cataract? (**Hint:** Draw a dot at the bottom of the U in the river between them. Measure to and from the dot and add.) _____

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Map: Ancient Civilizations © 2005 Creative Teaching Press